/17 cont./

342 [585] newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten, [263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

[888] The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all religious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all family rites. [593] Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are 428 [592] given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

A 267 [760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (aëladž) or with milk and cheese (atsamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, A [263] especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

E 269 Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatlama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fauʾtgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama); small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

E 272 Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), 273 mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), honey water (fauʾuš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šür), light and heavy wines from wild and cultivated grapes.

A 594 Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab apʾs) of the house manage A 597 the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult ceremonies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

C 565 Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Osset: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle; those freed by the princes

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
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sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *ȧ-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaẖwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakŭt-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*ȧ-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswȧ-ẖwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *ȧ-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswȧ*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *ȧămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Ȧyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Ȧyt'ar—bzhwȧyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zɔnȧp-yanŭ, bzhyə—tswəmzȧk zɔ̀kɔdr—dso*, etc., "*O, Ȧyt'ar—seven Ȧyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Ȧyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[1] *Alaẖwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *ẖwə* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *govt* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *Aa*, *Aww—Antswȧ*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.